

CIRM commits \$1.8 million to build stem cell teams, accelerate new therapies

Posted: August 25, 2011

CIRM commits \$1.8 million to build stem cell teams, accelerate new therapies

Stanford, Calif – The California Institute for Regenerative Medicine, the state stem cell agency created by proposition 71, today approved funding \$1.8 million to support 19 researchers in their effort to assemble competitive teams to develop applications for the Disease Team Therapy Development Awards, which will be due in winter 2012.

Today's planning awards are the first in a two-step process to receive the full research awards, which will be worth up to \$20 million each. CIRM offers the planning awards to offset the expense of bringing the critical team of experts together to plan their approach for bringing a proposed clinical trial to the FDA or even starting trials within a four-year window. Therapy development can normally take 12 or more years, and CIRM's funding intends to advance the most promising approaches towards and into early phase clinical trials. Those teams receiving a planning award will be able to submit a full research application, which the governing board will vote on in the summer of 2012. CIRM offers an exceptions pathway that allows for-profit companies to apply for the research award without first receiving a planning award.

CIRM President Alan Trounson said the awards represent the second round of CIRM funding that accelerates therapies by funding teams of scientists. "These planning awards continue CIRM's record of requiring scientists to work in teams, sharing knowledge and speeding the time to new therapies," he said. "Our first round of 14 Disease Team Awards are already generating prospective therapies that will be reaching clinical trials in the next few years. Now this next wave of planning awards brings new approaches to CIRM's portfolio of therapeutic candidates."

The planning grants went to 10 institutions with teams working toward therapies for Parkinson's disease, spinal cord injury, osteoporosis, heart failure, Huntington's disease and other currently incurable conditions.

The planning awards were part of the first governing board meeting to be presided over by the CIRM's new chairman, Jonathan Thomas. "It is a real victory for patient advocates and for the people of California to have such innovative approaches to developing new therapies occurring in the state," he said. "CIRM has been a leader in funding science that accelerates the pace of developing new therapies and this round of funding is no exception. Without CIRM, these scientists would be seeking multiple awards to fund incremental stages of therapy development rather than being able to focus on the research, and on the patients who are waiting for these new therapies."

At the same meeting, the governing board heard the proposed schedule for developing an updated scientific strategic plan. The original strategic plan created in 2006 called for an external review in three years that would guide revisions. The 2010 external review produced a report that will be the basis for the upcoming strategic plan revision. Public meetings are planned to gain input from patients, the general public, industry, basic and clinical scientists throughout California in addition to meetings with key international stem cell leaders. Based on these meetings a draft will be available for the full board to review in early in 2012.

The governing board also approved extending CIRM's program for recruiting influential mid- to late-career stem cell scientists to California institutions. These Research Leadership Awards have so far aided in recruiting two highly experienced scientists to the state, bringing with them jobs for lab personnel and additional federal and private funds.

The extension does not add funding to the program, which was originally intended to last two years and cover up to eight faculty members. The program will simply continue for another 18 months or until the originally approved funds run out.

CIRM Disease Team Therapy Development Planning Recipients

Application number	Name	Institution	Total Funds Approved
DR2-05272	Stuart Lipton	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	\$96,448

DR2-05288	Dan Gazit	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	\$109,743
DR2-05298	Martin Birchall	University of California, Davis	\$71,218
DR2-05302	Nancy Lane	University of California, Davis	\$110,000
DR2-05309	Antoni Ribas	University of California, Los Angeles	\$110,000
DR2-05320	Clive Svendsen	Cedars-Sinai Medical Center	\$89,834
DR2-05327	Mehrdad Abedi	University of California, Davis	\$74,195
DR2-05352	Timothy Hoey	OncoMed Pharmaceuticals, Inc.	\$65,120
DR2-05365	Judith Shizuru	Stanford University	\$109,676
DR2-05368	John Hood	Wintherix, LLC	\$99,110
DR2-05373	Albert Wong	Stanford University	\$109,750
DR2-05394	Robert Robbins	Stanford University	\$108,895
DR2-05410	Roberta Brinton	University of Southern California	\$107,989
DR2-05415	Vicki Wheelock	University of California, Davis	\$99,248
DR2-05416	Alexandra Capela	StemCells, Inc.	\$98,050
DR2-05423	John Laird	University of California, Davis	\$76,861
DR2-05426	Stanley Nelson	University of California, Los Angeles	\$86,414
DR2-05431	Marcel Daadi	Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute	\$99,976
DR2-05434	Jane Lebkowski	Geron Corporation	\$106,239
Total			\$1,828,766

A complete list of CIRM-funded institutions with total funding levels is available at: [/our-funding/funded-institutions](#)

A complete list of all CIRM awards can be found at: [/grants](#)

Source URL: <http://www.cirm.ca.gov/about-cirm/newsroom/press-releases/08252011/cirm-commits-18-million-build-stem-cell-teams-accelerate>